What is Mahara?

If you're wondering what Mahara or an e-portfolio is, why you might want one and what it can do for you, then read on - you're about to find out.

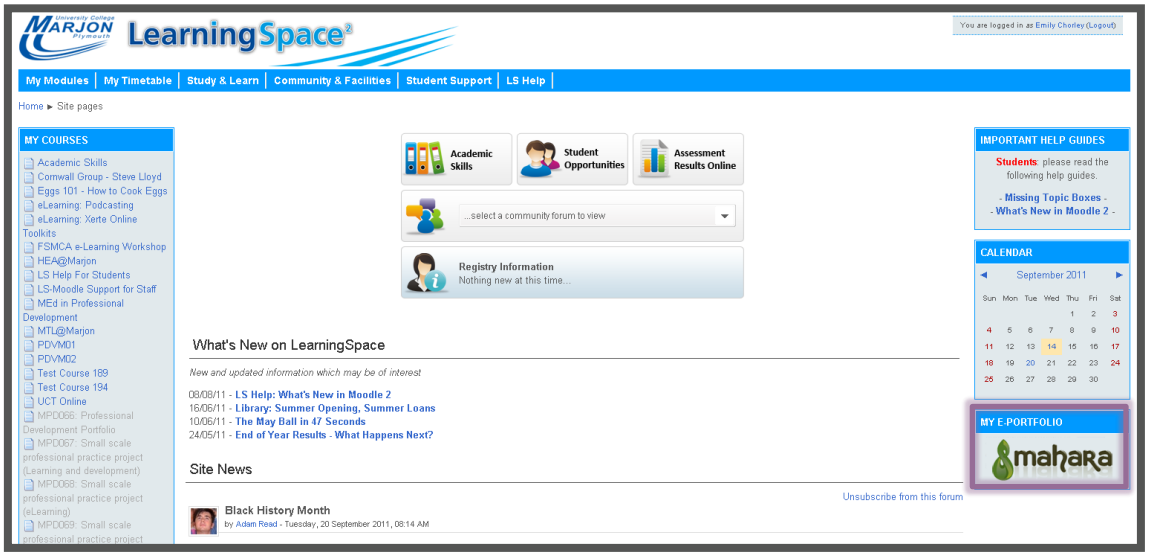
At the simplest level, Mahara is two things: an e-portfolio and a social networking system combined. An e-portfolio is a system in which students can record 'evidence of learning' - such as essays, artwork or almost anything else that can be stored digitally. These things are known as artefacts in Mahara.

Social networking systems need little introduction - think MySpace, Facebook or Bebo. Basically, they provide a way for people to interact with their friends or peers and create online networks.

Mahara is much more than just a place to store files. Mahara also includes a journal tool, allowing students to record and reflect on their learning experiences.

Logging into Mahara

- Log into Learning Space using your usual username and password.
- On the homepage you will see a link to Mahara, click this link to begin working on your e-portfolio;



Note: The **only** way to access Mahara is via Learning Space – it in not possible to log in to Mahara directly.

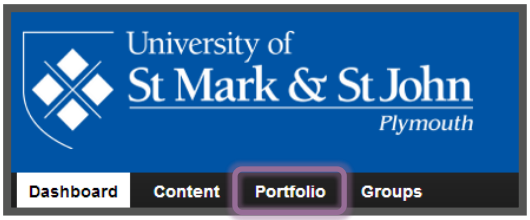
What is a page?

A page is a collection of resources that are presented together in one place which can be shared with other users. A page might take the form of a CV, reflective portfolio or a project presentation. Each Mahara user can create as many pages as they like.

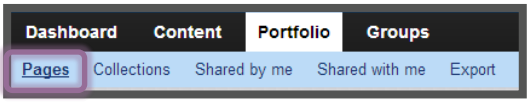
A page is created by adding a collection of blocks to an empty portfolio page which will pull in your information to form the finished item. These blocks can include text, images, files, video, RSS feeds, journal entries and profile information. Once set up, the page can then be named and allocated its own access permissions – from an individual user, groups and even to external parties (such as an employer).

Creating a page

- Click on the 'Portfolio' tab at the top of the screen;



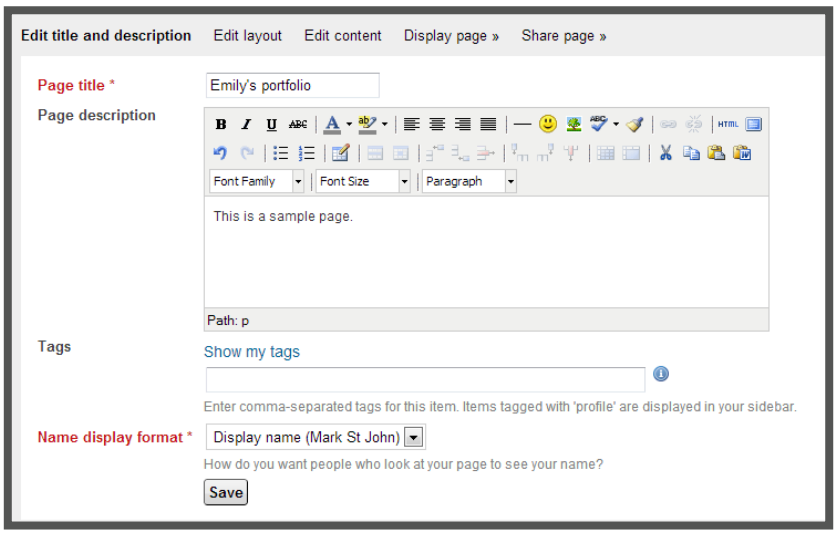
- Now click on 'Pages';



- Click on the 'Create Page' button in the top right;

Naming and saving a page

- After clicking the 'create a page' button you will automatically be asked to fill in the 'Title and description' areas.
- Give your page a title and a description;
- Click on the Save button.



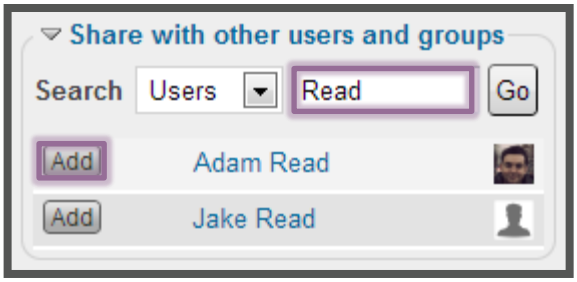
Sharing a page

- Now select the tab that says 'Share page';

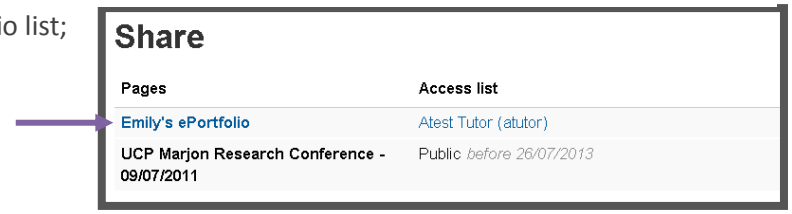
- Here you will be able to decide who can see your page;

Click on the Share with other users and groups link to select the users that you want to be able to see your page

- Use the search box to find your tutor from the list of **users** and then click on the Add button next to their name;

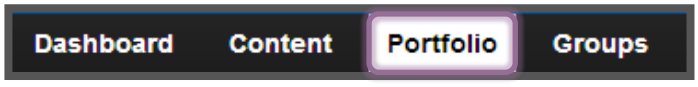


- Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on Save
- Your page will now show in your portfolio list;

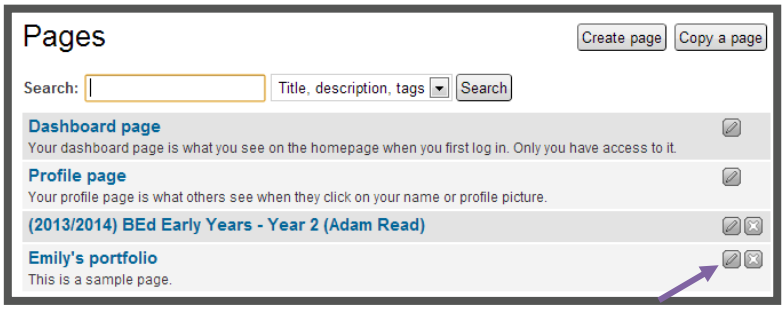


Adjusting the layout of a page

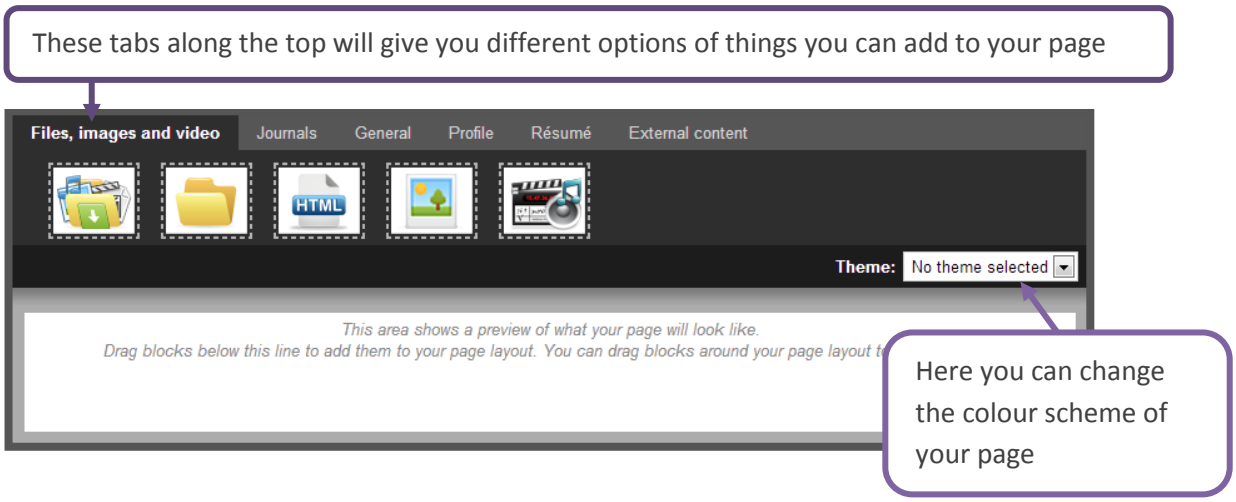
- After logging into Mahara you will need to navigate back to your page, to do this click on the 'Portfolio' link;



- Click on the grey pencil icon next to the name of the page that you want to edit;



- You will now see a selection of options on the screen that allow you to add different types of content (*also known as artefacts*) to the page;



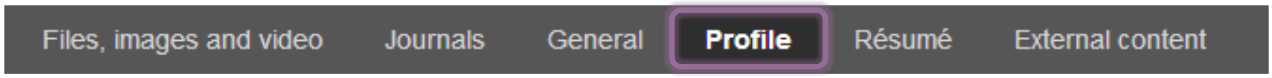
Adding content to your e-portfolio

You can now drag and drop blocks from the tabbed sections at the top of the page onto the blank area below to set up the layout of your page.

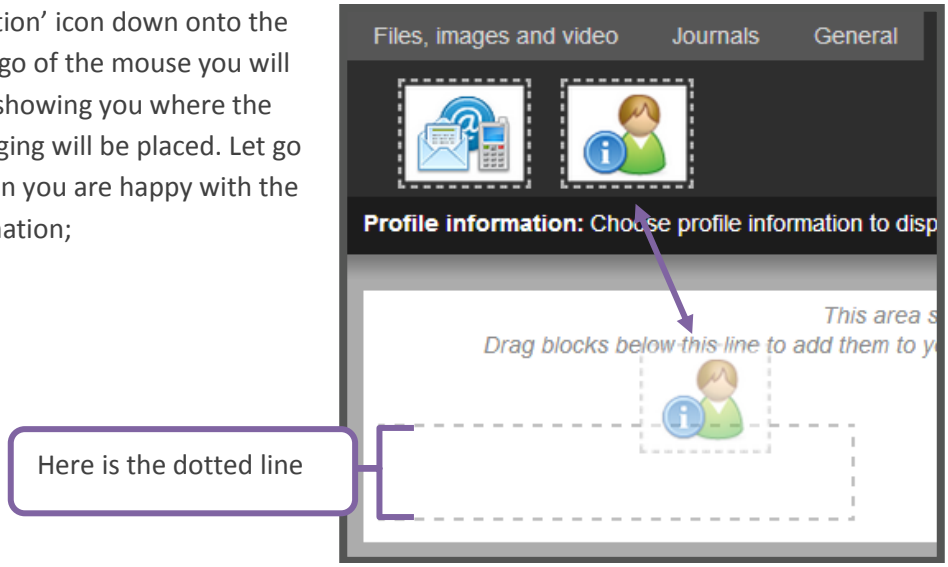
Contact information

Adding blocks from the profile tab will allow you to add personal information about yourself, for example your name, date of birth, address, and email address.

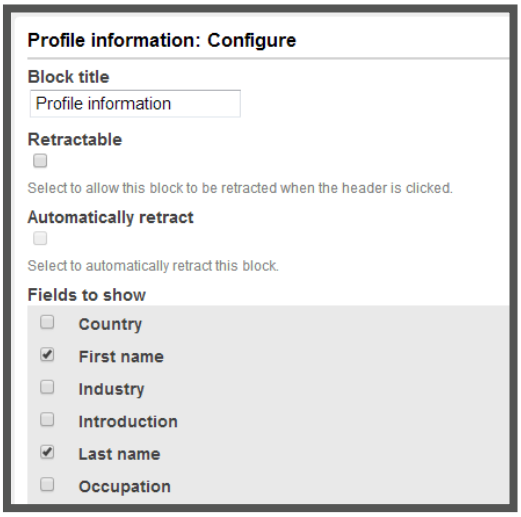
- We will start to populate the page by adding some profile information – select Profile from the tabs;



- Drag the 'Profile Information' icon down onto the grey area. Before you let go of the mouse you will see a dotted line appear showing you where the information you are dragging will be placed. Let go of the mouse button when you are happy with the placement of your information;



- In the profile settings you can decide what you want to display about yourself.



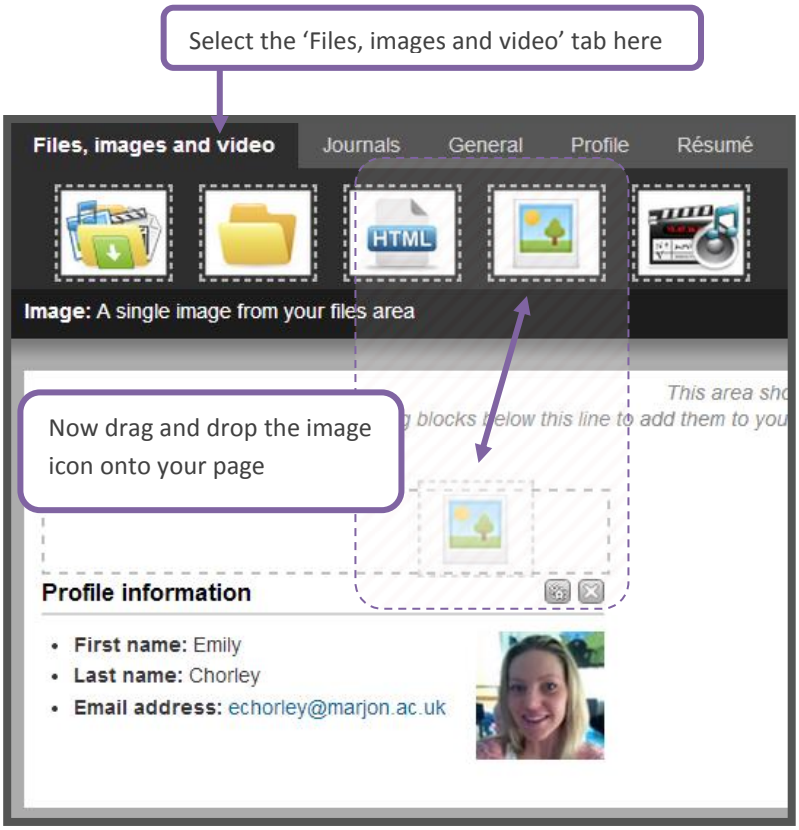
- Simply select each of the checkboxes and radio buttons until you have the information that you require, and then click Save

- Your Profile block will now have been added to your page;

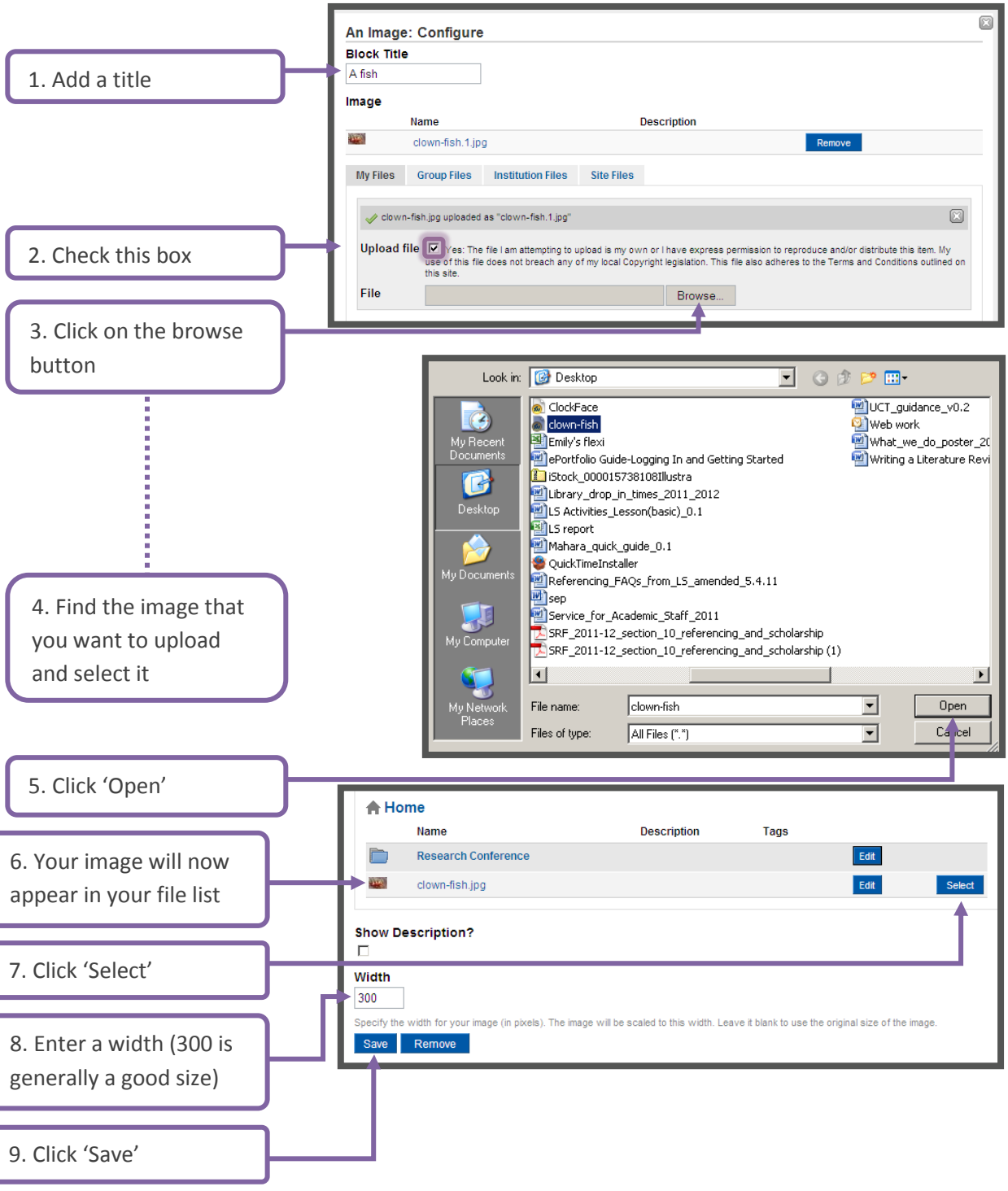
Note: Click on the **x** icon at the top right to delete unwanted blocks. Click on the **cog** icon if you want to open the block to edit it again;

Adding images **and files**

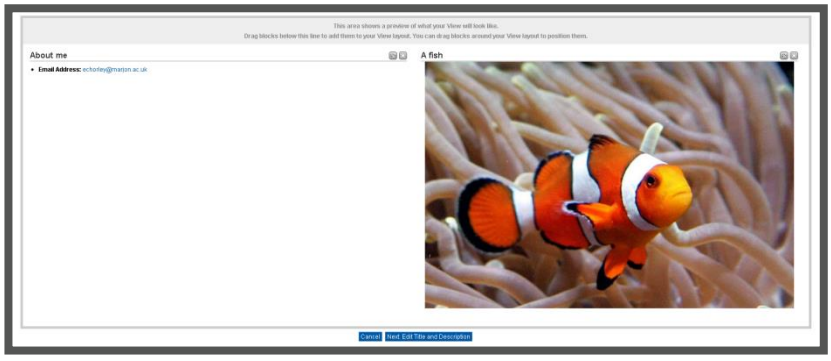
- Next we'll add an image to your page, select 'Files, images and video' from the tab menu and then drag and drop the 'Image' icon onto the grey area
(to add a file select the 'File(s) to Download' icon);



- Follow the steps in the next screen shot to upload an image;



- You will now have something similar to this;



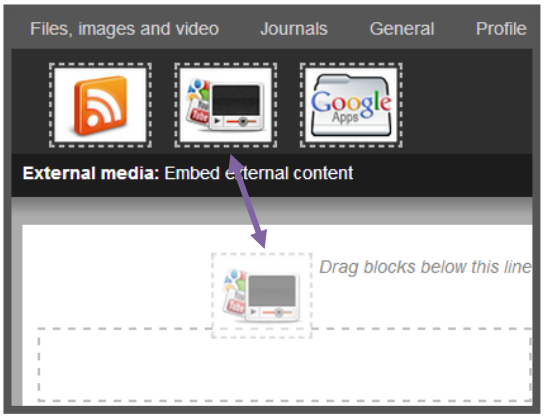
Adding a YouTube video

Adding videos to your e-portfolio is a great way to make it more interesting, this is very easy to do once you know how.

- To begin you will need to copy video URL. Open up YouTube in your web browser and find the video that you would like to add to your e-portfolio;

- Now copy the video URL;

- Next you will need to go back to your Mahara page select the '**External content'** tab and drag and drop the YouTube icon into your view;



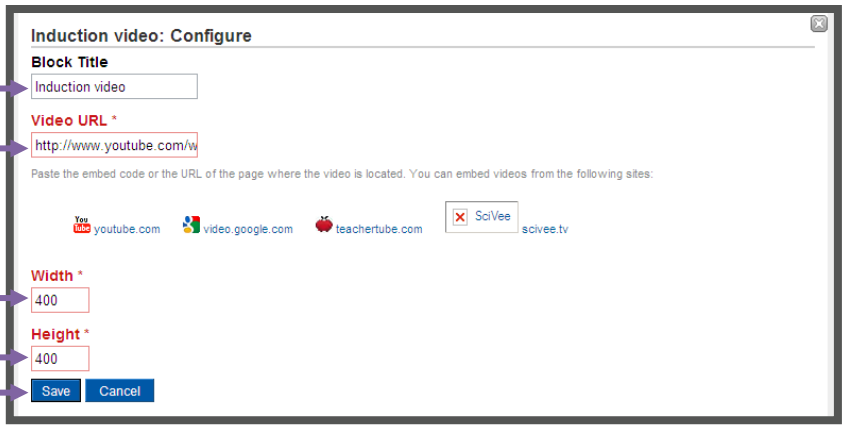
- This is where you will need to paste the video URL;

Add a title for your video

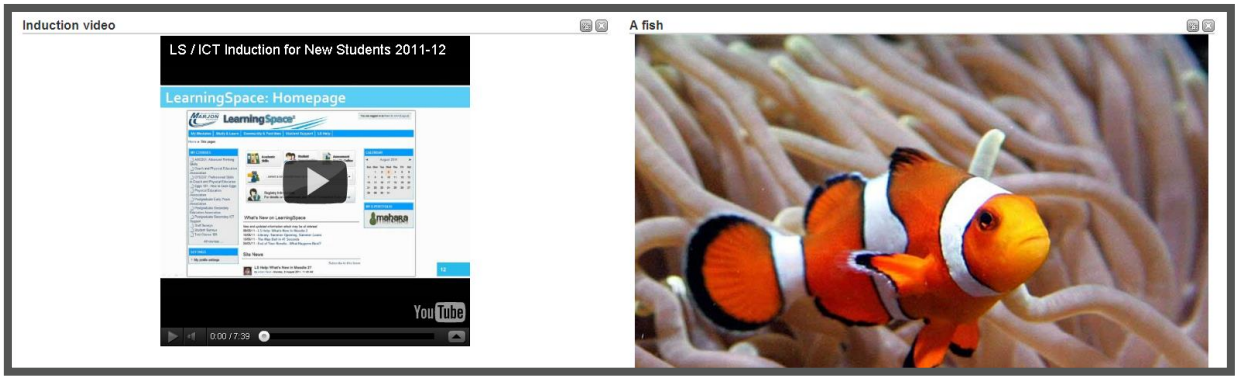
Paste the URL here

Be sure to add width and height attributes

Click 'Save'



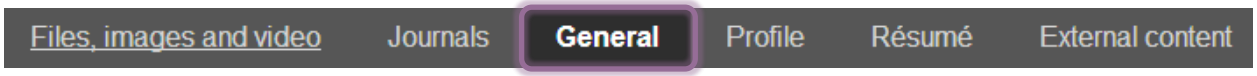
- And you will now see your video in your page;



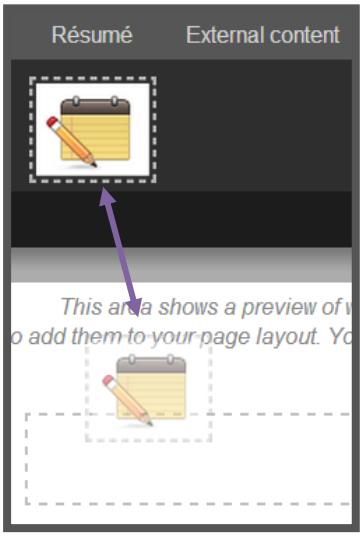
Adding a web link

If you want to add a hyper link in your e-Portfolio then this can be achieved by using the text box block.

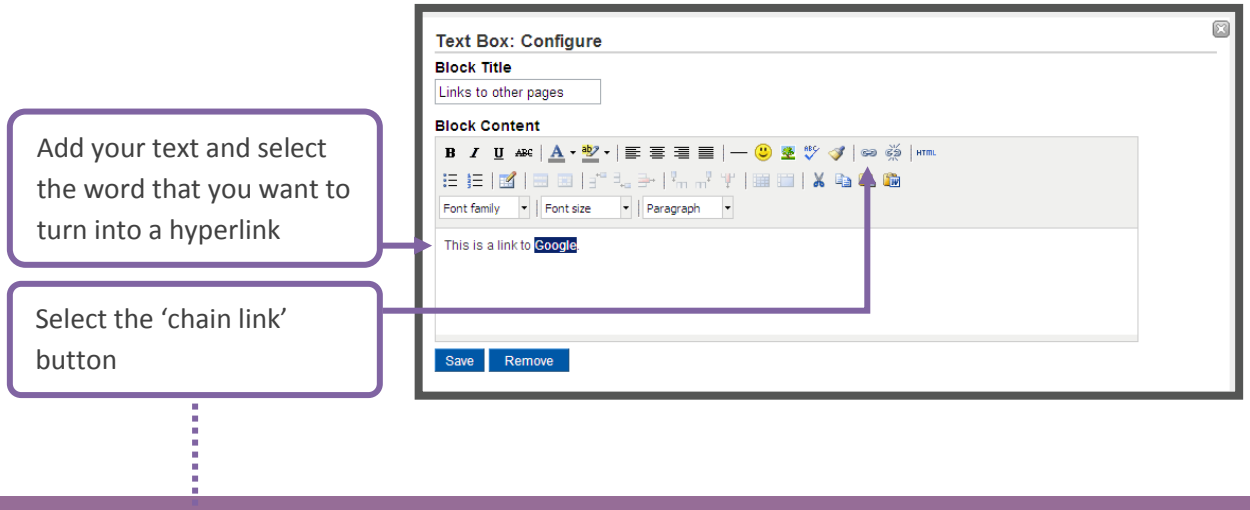
- Select 'General' from the tabs menu;

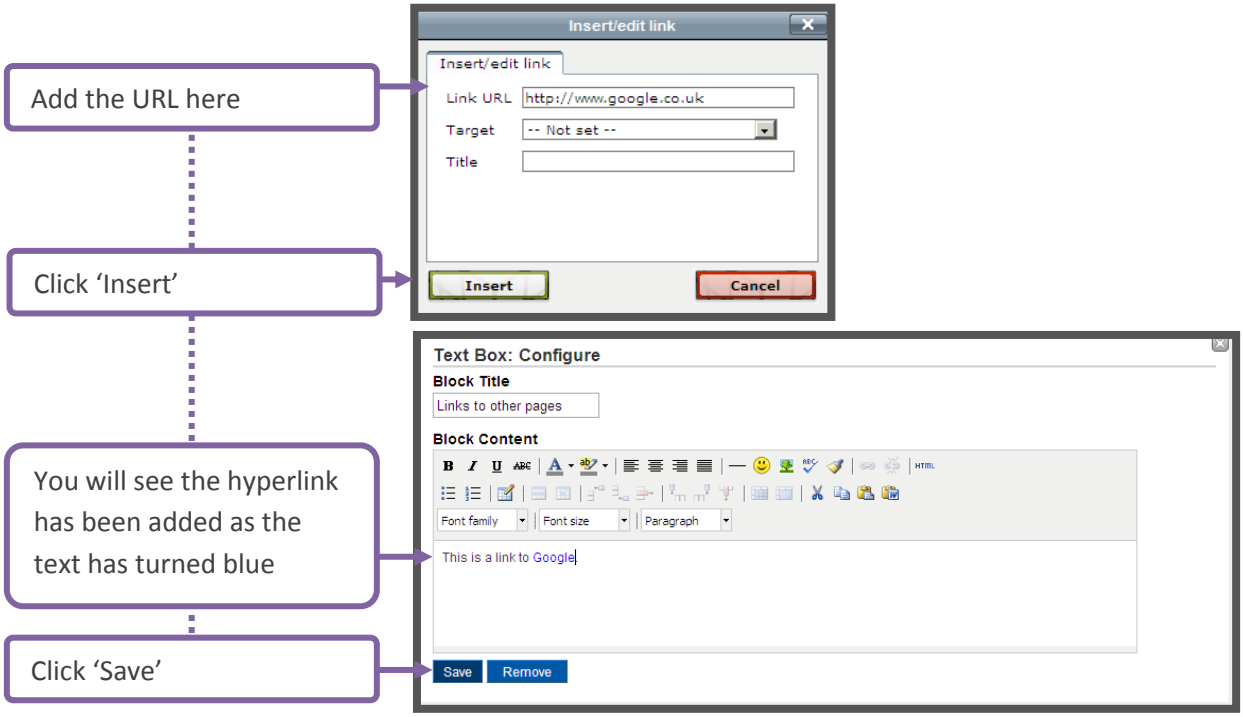


- Drag and drop the 'Text Box' icon into your view;

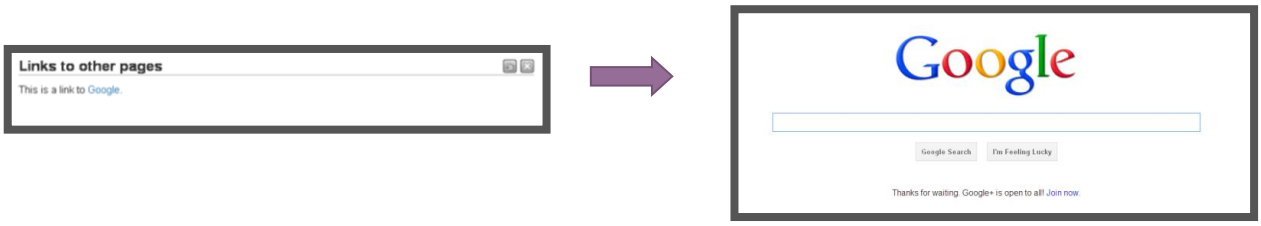


- Now give the block a title and follow these steps;





- Your hyperlink is now visible, you may want to click on it to make sure that it works;



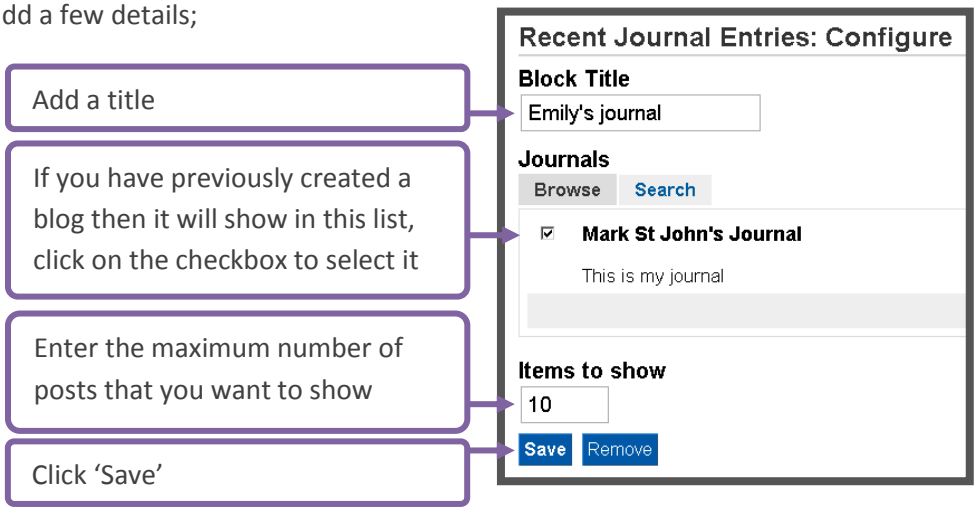
Adding a journal to a page

The journal tool allows users to create posts using a WYSIWYG editor, attach files to posts, embed images into entries and configure whether or not comments may be received on their journal.

There are three options when choosing to add a journal to your e-Portfolio;

- When you have decided which type of journal you would like to add, drag the icon onto your page;

- Now you need to add a few details;

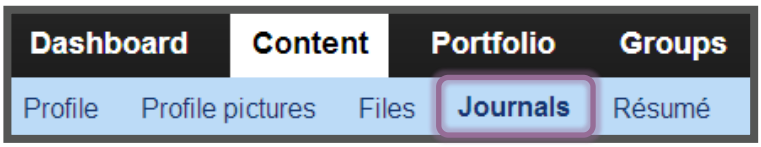


Creating a journal

If you do not already have a journal then you will need to create one;

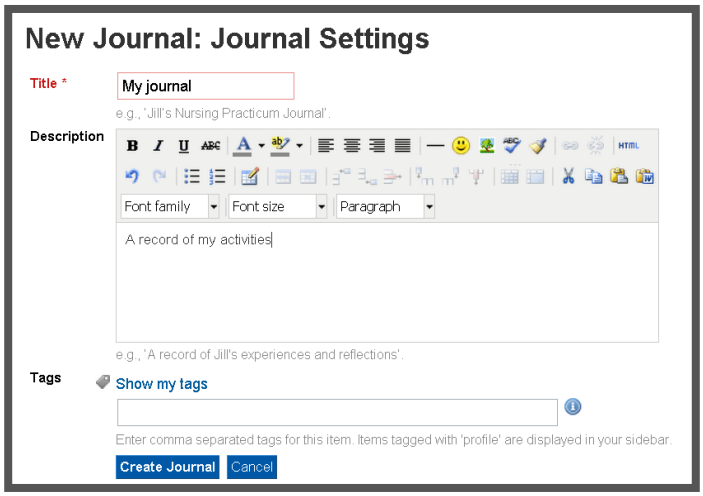
- Go to the top of the screen and hover over the small triangle next to the Mahara logo, this will produce a mini menu, then click on 'Content';

- You will now be taken to the 'pages' screen, click on 'Journals' from the tabs menu;



- Next click on the Create journal button at the right of the screen.

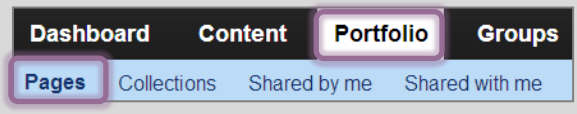
- You can now give your journal a title and enter a description;



- Click on the **Create journal** button when you have finished.

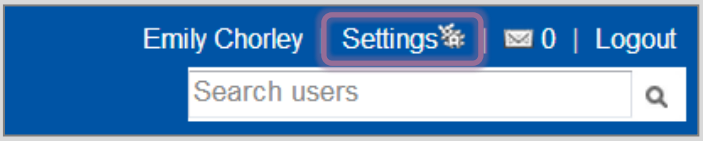
- The journal you have just created will now show up in your list of journals.

Note: To get back to your page so that you can add your new journal you will need to click on the 'Portfolio' link at the top of the screen, and then select the 'Pages' tab;

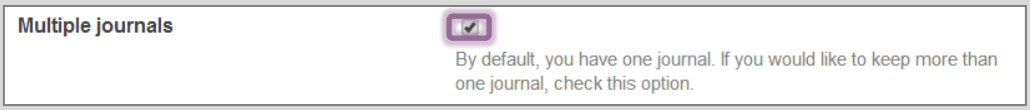


Now select the page that you want to continue editing;

Note: To enable multiple journals click on the '**settings**' link at the top right of the page;



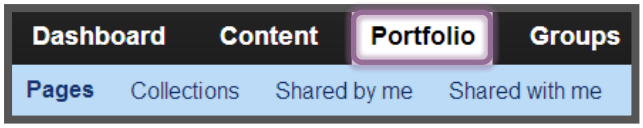
And then enable multiple journals by clicking the check box;



Copying a Page

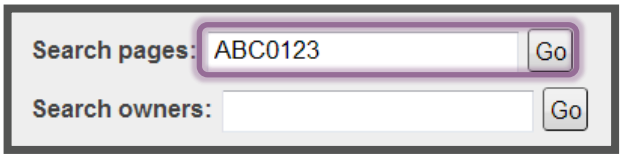
Sometimes you may need to copy a page that has been created by someone else, to do this;

- Click on 'Portfolio';



- Click on 'Copy a Page';

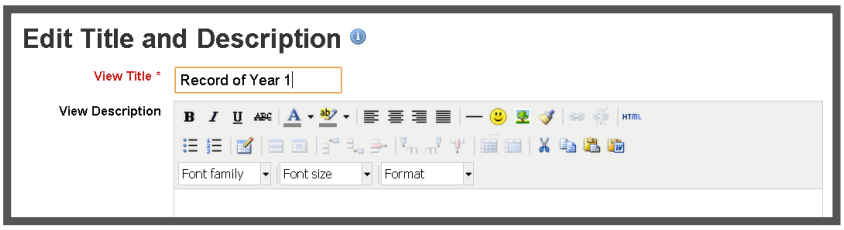
- In the search box type in the page title and click 'Go';



- Scroll down to find the appropriate page and then click on the Copy Page button. This will display the page in your Mahara portfolio. *(You can also use the search boxes to find a specific page).*

Note: Your new page should now be displayed. At the moment the view has a default name; you will need to change this to something more meaningful.

- Change the title of the page;



Note: At the moment this page will be private, so only you can see it. However, you will need to share your page and select your tutor from the list.

Go back to the 'Sharing a Page' section for steps to share your page with other users.

Further help

If you require any assistance please contact a member of the eLearning Team; LSHelp@marjon.ac.uk